

An Examination of the Use of the Trumpet in the Solo and Chamber Works of James Barnes

By

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Abstract

This document examines the chamber repertoire for trumpet and brass quintet by James Barnes. These pieces are explored within the context of Barnes's overall approach to composition, and specific aspects of his writing are selected for detailed analysis.

After a short biography, Barnes's general compositional output is discussed and his chamber and solo repertoire for trumpet are introduced. These works include the *Divertissement*, Op. 50, and his *Classical Suite*, Op. 79 for brass quintet; the *Duo Concertante for Solo Trumpet, Euphonium and Concert Band*, Op. 74; *The Fanfare and Capriccio for Solo Trumpet and Symphonic Band*, Op. 102; "Poem" and "Scherzino," etudes for solo trumpet; and the *Toccata*, Op. 104 for four trumpets, four cornets, and four flugelhorns. A broad context for these works is established by examining Barnes's compositional philosophy including his emphasis on hard work, a detailed study of the classical repertoire, musical craftsmanship, orchestration, his knowledge of instrumental technique and tone color, and his lyrical melodic writing.

Barnes is a superb orchestrator, and the next section of the document analyzes Barnes's use of cornets and flugelhorns along with trumpets to provide additional tone colors in some of his chamber works. This section demonstrates the importance of the interplay between these tone colors within the formal construction of these pieces. Afterwards, the following section of the document examines humor as an important element in many of Barnes's works and shows many of the techniques that he uses to incorporate it into these works. The final section of the main body of the document discusses the influence of forms and techniques from earlier stylistic periods on Barnes's works. This includes a comparison of Barnes's "Passacaglia" from his *Classical Suite* with J.S. Bach's passacaglia from the *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor*, BWV 582.

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Introduction

James Barnes is a composer of international renown whose works have been performed around the world. Although many musicians are most familiar with his works for wind band, they may be less familiar with his works for solo trumpet, brass quintet, and trumpet ensemble. This repertoire includes a piece for solo for trumpet and band; a duo for trumpet, euphonium and band; two brass quintets; two etudes for trumpet; and a large trumpet ensemble.

This paper will explore this specific repertoire and place it within the larger context of Barnes's approach to composition. It is hoped that an examination of these works will facilitate their future performance.

Biography

James ("Jim") Barnes was born on September 9, 1949 in Hobart, Oklahoma. The son of a cattleman and grain dealer, Barnes's "early years were spent working for his father at the family-owned feedlot and participating in 4-H."¹ His musical studies began when he joined the school band in the sixth grade where he first played the baritone. He experienced what he describes as the first "turning point of his career"² when he was reassigned to the tuba a year and a half later. Instead of "suffering through the muddle of sound in the same octave with all the trombones,

¹ James Barnes. "James Barnes" In *Composers on Composing for Band*, ed. Mark Camphouse, (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2002), 1.

² Ibid.

saxophones, horns and what not, he could hear every note that he played on the tuba—no one was in the way.”³

In his eighth-grade year Barnes decided that he wanted to be a professional musician after being “astounded” by a performance of the U.S. Navy Band. He said, “I had no idea that a band could sound like that. I made up my mind on the spot that I wanted to be a musician.”⁴ In the same year he also began composing, and his early compositions included a woodwind quintet and a piece for tuba.⁵ Barnes began his long association with the University of Kansas (KU) when he attended the Midwestern Music Camp for several summers where he had his first formal composition studies with Dr. John Pozdro, a composition professor at KU. While in high school Barnes continued to study composition and tuba performance. He read *The Technique of Orchestration* by Kent Kennan as a sophomore, and began to purchase and study orchestral scores. As a senior he drove 120 miles every Monday night for a tuba lesson.⁶

After graduating from high school in 1967, Barnes received a scholarship to KU, where he studied composition with John Pozdro and visiting Professor Allen Irving McHose. While a student at KU, Barnes wrote arrangements for the Marching Jayhawks and worked as the staff arranger and director of the Men’s Basketball Band.⁷

After completing his Masters of Music degree in composition, also from KU, Barnes joined the KU faculty as the Assistant Director of Bands in 1976, under Director of Bands, Robert Foster. He later became an Associate Professor in 1984 and a Full Professor in 1992. In

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁵ James Barnes, interview by Mason Tyler, Lawrence, November 13, 2014.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 2.

1998, he left the band division to work full time in the theory and composition division where he teaches orchestration, composition, and history courses.⁸ Barnes's many students include Carl Johnson (B.A., 1988), an Emmy-winning composer and orchestrator of film and television scores, and Dan Forrest (D.M.A, 2007), an award-winning⁹ composer known especially for his choral works.¹⁰

Barnes has received acclaim as a conductor, composer, and educator. His many awards include the American Bandmasters Association's coveted Ostwald Award for outstanding contemporary band music, ASCAP Awards for composers of serious music, the Kappa Kappa Psi Distinguished Service to Music Medal, the Bohumil Makovsky Award for Outstanding College Band Conductors, and the first annual BMI Award for Excellence in Teaching Creativity from the Music Educators National Conference.¹¹ He has had works commissioned by all five of the major military bands in Washington, D.C.¹² In addition, his works have been recorded by college and professional bands including three compact discs by the renowned Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra of Tokyo, Japan and recent releases by the United States Air Force Band and the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own."¹³

⁸ Ibid, 3.

⁹ <http://www.danforrest.com/bio/> (accessed November 21, 2014).

¹⁰ J. Bunker Clark and Paul R. Laird. *Music & Dance at KU: A History of Two Performing Arts at the University of Kansas*. (Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas, 2007), 83.

¹¹ School of Music, "James Barnes," University of Kansas, <http://music.ku.edu/james-barnes> (accessed October 27, 2014)

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Works

Barnes has written and arranged hundreds of works for marching band, concert band, symphony orchestra, and chamber ensembles.¹⁴ He has composed eight symphonies for wind band and orchestra; solo concertos for tuba, euphonium, and flute; and, at the time of this writing, has completed 148 opus-numbered works.¹⁵ Notable works include his Symphony No. 1, Barnes's master's thesis and winner of the Ostwald Award in 1978; *Visions Macabre*, winner of the Ostwald Award in 1981; the *Fantasy Variations on a Theme by Niccolo Paganini*, commissioned by the United States Marine Band; Symphony No. 3, commissioned by the United States Air Force Band; and the Symphonic Requiem (Symphony No. 7), Op. 135, recently recorded by the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own." He is also known for his works for younger players including the popular "Yorkshire Ballad" for Grade 3 band.

Brass Quintets

Barnes has written two works for brass quintet, including his *Divertissement*, Op. 50, and his *Classical Suite*, Op. 79. The *Divertissement* was written for the Kansas Brass Quintet, the University of Kansas faculty quintet, and was published in 1984. Its four movements are titled "Intrada," "Headache Scherzo (Or: The Blight of the Fumble Bee)," "Pastorale," and "The Tin-

¹⁴ Barnes, interview.

¹⁵ Barnes's *Serenade for Winds*, Op. 149 is scheduled to be premiered by the Kansas Virtuosi on April 19, 2015 in Swarthout Recital Hall on the main campus of the University of Kansas in Lawrence. This new chamber work will be scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, bassoon, two Bb trumpets, two horns in F, trombone, tuba, and double bass.

Ear Rag.” The *Classical Suite* was commissioned by the United States Army Brass Quintet from Ft. Myer, Virginia and published in 1992. Its four movements are titled “Overture”, “Song”, “Passacaglia”, and “High Society Waltz.” Barnes’s two brass quintets are generally light in character. They both have elements of humor and lyricism and require technically skilled players.

Solos for Trumpet and Band or Trumpet, Euphonium and Band

Barnes has written two works that include solo trumpet and band. The *Duo Concertante for Solo Trumpet, Euphonium and Concert Band, Op. 74* was commissioned by the United States Air Force Band for the soloists Vic and Brian Bowman. It was published in 1991, and an arrangement with piano accompaniment by the composer was published in 1999.

The *Fanfare and Capriccio for Solo Trumpet and Symphonic Band, Op. 102* was written for soloist Allen Vizzutti. It was premiered by Vizzutti and the KU Concert Band with Barnes conducting in April 1998 at the Lied Center in Lawrence, Kansas.¹⁶ “Fanfare and Capriccio was written especially for the talents and abilities of this great virtuoso, a man who should only be compared to such figures as Herbert L. Clarke and Rafael Mendez,” Barnes said.¹⁷ In 1999, an arrangement by the composer was published for trumpet and piano. This arrangement includes a standard trumpet part and the “Special Vizzutti Version” which features many passages that are

¹⁶ News Archive, “Trumpeter Vizzutti to Solo with KU Concert Band,” University of Kansas, <http://archive.news.ku.edu/1998/98N/AprilNews/April13/concert.html> (accessed October 27, 2014)

¹⁷ Ibid.

transposed up an octave into the extreme high register of the trumpet. (See Page 16-17 for examples and discussion.)

These two pieces are both virtuoso showpieces for soloist(s) and band and share many common characteristics including a similar style of solo virtuosic writing in their fast sections where the melodic material is based primarily on scale and arpeggio patterns. They also each have middle lyrical sections with long ornamented solo melodic lines over richly extended harmonic accompaniments and cadenzas with both technical and lyrical elements.

Etudes

Barnes wrote two solo trumpet etudes for Philip Smith¹⁸, while Smith was Principal Trumpet of the New York Philharmonic. The first, “Poem,”¹⁹ was published in *Concert Studies for Trumpet* in 2001, and the second, “Scherzino,”²⁰ was published in *Advanced Concert Studies for Trumpet* in 2006.

Each of these short pieces heavily emphasizes the interval of the tritone. Phrases are generally constructed from repeated and varied motivic units, and each etude is divided into contrasting sections. “Poem” is divided into an opening adagio, a *Piu mosso* section, and a return of the opening adagio material. “Scherzino” is faster, marked *Energico*, and the more difficult of the two etudes; it consists of several statements of two contrasting sections.

¹⁸ New York Philharmonic: Co-Principal Trumpet (1978-1988), Principal Trumpet (1988-2014)

¹⁹ James Barnes, “Poem,” in *Concert Studies: 16 New Studies from Grade 3 through 6 for Trumpet* (Wilmore, KY: Curnow Music Press, Inc., 2001), 14-15.

²⁰ James Barnes “Scherzino” in *Advanced Concert Studies: 19 New Studies from Grade 4 through 6 for Trumpet* (Wilmore, KY: Curnow Music Press, Inc., 2006) 12-13.

Trumpet Ensemble

Barnes composed his *Toccata, Op. 104* for Professor Christopher Moore and the University of Kansas Trumpet Ensemble who premiered it at the 1999 International Trumpet Guild Conference in Roanoke, Virginia. It is scored for four trumpets, four cornets, and four flugelhorns.

Barnes's Approach to Composition

Barnes has a highly practical approach to composition. He treats composition as hard work informed by a broad knowledge of musical style, history, and technique. He writes with a strong attention to detail and with thoughtful respect towards the players of his works.

Hard Work

Barnes learned the value of hard work from his father, Sid, the cattleman and grain dealer,²¹ and for Barnes, hard work is an essential element in his approach to his composition. He has said that “what little I have accomplished in my life can be more attributed to hard work than talent.”²² For him, composition is often a difficult, arduous, and mentally exhausting process, about which he has said that “sometimes everything just pours out, but more often it takes anguish and pain to get what I want. It is rarely easy.”²³

Study of the Classical Repertoire

Barnes has made a broad and detailed study of the classical repertoire, and much of his composition is informed by the style and techniques from past composers. As a student he says that he “spent every chance I had in the library listening to new music.... Nobody had to tell me

²¹ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 19.

²² Ibid.

²³ Thomas Liley, “Some Compositions Just Pour Out, Others Tortuously and in Chunks: An Interview with Composer James Barnes,” *The Instrumentalist* 57, no. 4 (Nov. 2002): 12.

to listen to all of the Mahler Symphonies. Nobody had to tell me to go listen to all of the Sibelius orchestral music. I just *did it*.’’²⁴ He has said that “if you don’t know where you came from, how do you know where you’re going? And, that’s the trouble with a lot of students today, they don’t study Beethoven, they don’t look at Berlioz, they don’t look at Tchaikovsky... They don’t understand the great tradition of serious music.’’²⁵ Barnes has said that unlike in other art forms, a musical score must show all of the techniques and materials that the composer used in that piece. For example, “When you read a novel all you see is the last draft... but if I want to know how Bartok did something, I just go get the score out, because when you write music you have to give it all away; Because it’s a blueprint; It shows you *exactly* how to it. And it’s the only art form I know that does that. And so if you study scores, you can’t help but get some good ideas.’’²⁶

Craftsmanship

Barnes approaches composition with a thorough knowledge of technique and careful attention to detail similarly to the way a skilled craftsman would approach the construction of a fine piece of furniture. Barnes states “single musical ideas often come in inspired moments, but large works are successful because of their *craftsmanship*. I cannot over-emphasize this concept

²⁴ Barnes, interview.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

of craftsmanship; it is this quality of technical training that eventually separates professionals from amateurs.”²⁷

The care and technical precision with which Barnes pursues his craft can be seen in his manuscript writing. Though he now uses musical notation software in order to save time extracting parts, he previously wrote out his scores by hand. Barnes describes the preparation of manuscript scores by hand as “a labor of love. When I prepared a full score, I worked in a manner befitting an artisan as much as an artist. Writing a score by hand is similar to building a fine cabinet or sewing a handmade suit.”²⁸ As seen in Example 1 from score to *Fanfare and Capriccio*, Barnes’s manuscript scores are full of fine detail and are written in a compact, consistent, and precise hand.

²⁷ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 6.

²⁸ Liley, 12-13.

Example 1: Fanfare and Capriccio Op. 102, score, final page²⁹

242 243

Picc.

Fls.

Oboes

Bass.

C 1

L 2

A 3

R 3

I 3

N 3

E Bass

T S.C.A.

S

A 2

X 2

E Ten.

S Bar.

Solo

Tpts.

Horns

Tbns.

Euph.

Tuba

D. B.

Timp.

1 Bells

2 Tamb.

3 Sn. Dr.

4. +

5. E. Dr.

R138

James Barnes

Lawrence, Mo. - 4 January, 1908

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²⁹ James Barnes, *Fanfare and Capriccio for Solo Trumpet and Symphonic Band, Op. 102* (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1999), 47.

Orchestration

Barnes is a superb orchestrator³⁰ and he has “never been able to separate the process of composition from orchestration.”³¹ He learned to orchestrate mostly by “reading books like Cecil Forsyth’s *Orchestration*, Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Principles of Orchestration*, by studying the great orchestral works of Berlioz, Wagner, Rimsky-Korsakov, Sibelius, Mahler, Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Respighi, and Bartok, and by writing for the bands and orchestras at KU.”³²

Barnes also knows the strengths, weaknesses, and various qualities of each instrument. He has said that as an “undergraduate, I played a different instrument in the non-music major band almost every semester, just to ‘get the feel’ of them.”³³ He also took a semester of violin lessons and a semester of percussion lessons where he says that he “spent a considerable amount of time talking about how to write for them idiomatically and playing little exercises I had written for the teachers to play.”³⁴

Writing for Musicians

When Barnes writes for each instrument, he carefully considers the skill level of the player that he is writing for, along with the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument in order

³⁰ J. Bunker Clark and Paul R. Laird. *Music & Dance at KU: A History of Two Performing Arts at the University of Kansas*. (Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas, 2007), 83.

³¹ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 8.

³² Ibid, 7.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid, 8.

to facilitate successful performances in which the player sounds at his or her best. Barnes has said, “I’ve never written a note for the clarinets, but I’ve written millions of notes for clarinet players. It’s the same for the trumpet. I don’t write for the trumpet. I write for trumpet players.”³⁵

He advises composers to

treat instruments and players like any of your other old friends: with reverence and respect. Love them all for what they are, not what you think they should be. Try to never put them in a situation that might embarrass them or make the sound awkward or stupid. In that way, you’ll seldom make an enemy in a rehearsal room.³⁶

Barnes has written for ensembles and players at all skill levels ranging from beginners to some of the world’s top professional players. Barnes carefully considers how to adjust the difficulty for each situation so that each part is playable by the performer, but also challenging and enjoyable. For example when discussing writing for younger players he said, “When I’m writing grade 3’s for young bands, I always make sure that some place in the piece the tubas and the low woodwinds get the melody.... If you give kids things that are fun to play they’ll learn how to play it. If you don’t give them anything fun to play they’ll never play it very well.”³⁷

Even in his challenging music for advanced players, Barnes tries to write idiomatically for each instrument. For example, he will often choose the key of a piece based on that key’s ease of performance for a given instrument or ensemble. He said, “I learned early on that if you write in flat keys, like Ab and Eb, the band sounded better. It just does. That’s like writing for orchestra in G or D. They sound better, because they have open strings on everything. They just

³⁵ Barnes, interview.

³⁶ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 9.

³⁷ Barnes, Interview.

sound more vibrant.”³⁸ To illustrate this point he said, “Look at all the great violin concertos. Most of them are in D. The Brahms is in D. The Tchaikovsky’s in D. The Beethoven’s in D.”³⁹ Many of his brass pieces with fast technical passages are in keys that facilitate fluid fingering on brass instruments. The *Duo Concertante*, the *Fanfare and Capriccio*, and the “Overture” from the *Classical Suite* are all in Eb, and the “High Society Waltz” from the *Classical Suite* is in Bb. In reference to choosing keys Barnes said, “The old saw that you hear from theory teachers that good players can play in any key equally well; that’s just [bull]. That’s just not true. You put strings in five flats, and they’re in real trouble, because they have to use the fourth finger all the time, and if you write a thing for brass in E major, you’re going to be there all night rehearsing that, because it just doesn’t fit the fingers..., [but] if a brass player can’t play in Eb, then they just need to hock their instrument; because, I mean, that’s the easiest key in the world on a brass instrument”⁴⁰ Example 2 is a fast technical passage for Bb trumpet in the key of Eb concert from the *Duo Concertante*.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Example 2: Duo Concertante for Solo Trumpet, Euphonium, and Concert Band, Solo Trumpet in Bb (in octaves with the Solo Euphonium), mm. 43-57⁴¹



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In many cases Barnes knew the players for whom he was writing and composed to highlight the skills of these players, but also to challenge them. For example, Barnes humorously described why he wrote a difficult tuba part for his *Classical suite*:

When I got the commission to write that piece for the Army Brass Quintet, Lynden Mitchell called me; He was the horn player in the group, and asked me if I'd do it, and I said, "I've been waiting to do this for twenty-five or thirty years"; And he said, "why is that?" and I said, "Jack Tilbury [the quintet's tuba player] beat me out first-chair in the All-State band three years in a row—we sat by each other in the All-State band, he beat me out every year; And I said, "He'll never get through that piece the same way twice." And that's why that tuba part is so hard; it was *revenge*. [Laughs] But it's not unplayable. Jack played the Bejesus out of it.⁴²

The *Fanfare and Capriccio* is another piece which was written for one particular player. It includes a "Special Vizzutti Version" trumpet part which was written for the unique skill set of the

⁴¹ James Barnes, *Duo Concertante for Solo Trumpet, Euphonium, and Concert Band, Op. 74: Edition for Solo Instruments and Piano by the Composer* (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1999), 5.

⁴² Barnes, interview.

trumpet virtuoso Allen Vizzutti. This part contains several higher octave transpositions and requires playing in the high range that is well beyond what is typically expected from professional players in a classical setting.

Example 3: Fanfare and Capriccio, Solo Bb Trumpet part, mm. 38-45⁴³



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⁴³ James Barnes, "Solo Bb Trumpet" *Fanfare and Capriccio for Solo Trumpet, Op. 102: Arranged for Trumpet and Piano by the Composer* (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1999), 3.

Example 4: Fanfare and Capriccio, Solo Bb Trumpet (Special Vizzutti Version), mm. 38-45⁴⁴



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When Barnes writes his instrumental parts he includes detailed instructions to the player in order to reduce ambiguity in rehearsal and performance and to achieve his desired musical effect. He said, “The thing I always tell my comp students is to emphasize the obvious, don’t leave anything to question.... The more clear you can make it to the player, the better performance you’re going to get. Let’s hope, anyway.”⁴⁵ In his writing for winds, Barnes takes care when notating articulated passages to use the various articulation markings to achieve the desired effect. For example, in the opening of the trumpet part to the *Fanfare and Capriccio*, every note receives an articulation mark with accents generally occurring on beats, staccatos on the unstressed notes, and marcato accents on notes that receive particular emphasis.

⁴⁴ James Barnes, “Solo Bb Trumpet (Special Vizzutti Version)” *Fanfare and Capriccio for Solo Trumpet, Op. 102: Arranged for Trumpet and Piano by the Composer* (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1999), 3.

⁴⁵ Barnes, interview.

Example 5: Fanfare and Capriccio, Solo Bb Trumpet part, mm. 1-14⁴⁶

Allegro moderato (♩ = 108 - 112)

f energico

5

9 10

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Lyrical Writing (Songs)

Many of Barnes's pieces have slow lyrical sections or movements based on vocal models including the *Fanfare and Capriccio*, the *Duo Concertante*, and the "Song" from the *Classical Suite*. Barnes's says that the best complement that he ever received about his music was from a third trumpet player after a marching band rehearsal. He was walking back from rehearsal with Robert Foster and a group of students and, "[the third trumpet player] said, 'You know what I like about your arrangements?'" and I said, 'No, I don't,' and he said, 'You give me a song to play, too.' And that's the whole secret to writing for all players is to give everybody a song."⁴⁷ In order to communicate with audiences Barnes said, "I don't write themes. I write songs. [pause] I write *songs*, because people are used to hearing songs.... In music the only thing that is really

⁴⁶ James Barnes, "Solo Bb Trumpet" *Fanfare and Capriccio for Solo Trumpet, Op. 102: Arranged for Trumpet and Piano by the Composer* (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1999), 2.

⁴⁷ Barnes, interview.

most important is melody, and all the great music that ever been played and all the great music that continues to be played is melodic.... The melody is the message.”⁴⁸

Many lyrical sections or movements have a strong jazz influence.⁴⁹ He places song-like melodies over harmonic accompaniments consisting of seventh and ninth chords. Examples 6 and 7 show the first half of the trumpet melody at the beginning of the lyrical section in the *Fanfare and Capriccio*. The melody can be simplified using the first note every two beats and the accented Eb₅ in m. 31. This simplified melody begins on the written C₅, leaps to an Eb₅, and then descends chromatically back to C₅ before repeating. The roots of the chords in mm. 33-34 follow a circle of fifths pattern.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Example 6: Fanfare and Capriccio, Piano Score, mm. 31-34⁵⁰

31 Molto espressivo (♩ = 56 - 60)

(arp.)

33

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Example 7: Fanfare and Capriccio, simplified melody (transposed to concert pitch) with chord symbols, mm. 31-34⁵¹

E♭⁹ C^(♭9) Fm A♭m⁹ D♭ Gm⁷ C^(♭9) Fm⁷ B♭^(♭9)

⁵⁰ James Barnes, "Piano Score" *Fanfare and Capriccio for Solo Trumpet, Op. 102: Arranged for Trumpet and Piano by the Composer* (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1999), 5.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Barnes's Use of Tone Color

As a skilled orchestrator, Barnes has extensive experience using varying instrumental tone colors in different musical contexts. In many of his band and chamber works, he uses cornets and flugelhorns in addition to trumpets to achieve a wider spectrum of tone color. The cornet, in particular, is often considered an alternative to the trumpet, and cornet parts are frequently played on trumpets by modern performers; Barnes, however, writes for the cornet as having distinct sound from that of the trumpet, and this distinction is important in the construction of some of his pieces. Regarding the use of cornets in his band works, he said, “The old guys knew what they were doing with trumpets and cornets. They really did.... I’ve always liked cornets.... but I like trumpets too, but you use trumpets for the bright color, and you use cornets for the rich color.”⁵² He usually writes for flugelhorns to play with euphoniums or horns, and rarely with the trumpets. He compares the use of trumpets as the only brass soprano voice to having a woodwind section where the clarinets are the only high woodwind color.⁵³

“Song” from *Classical Suite*

In “Song,” the second movement from his *Classical Suite* for brass quintet, Barnes uses the cornet, flugelhorn, and euphonium for their distinct tone colors in lyrical melodic passages. The other movements of this brass quintet use the standard instrumentation, but for this movement, the first trumpet player switches to cornet, the second trumpet player to flugelhorn,

⁵² Barnes, interview.

⁵³ Ibid.

and the trombone player to euphonium. With these three substitutions, all five players are playing conical brass instruments—cornet, flugelhorn, horn, euphonium, and tuba—instead of the mix of conical and cylindrical brass instruments typically used in the standard brass quintet instrumentation.

This movement is written in the style of a jazz ballad with long melodic lines and seventh and ninth chord accompaniments. It is in ternary form with a short introduction, and each formal section features a solo instrument on the melody. The cornet leads the eight-measure introduction, which is followed by the first statement of the main melody played by the flugelhorn in mm. 9-21. The euphonium then repeats the melody with some variation in mm. 21-34. Next, the contrasting middle section, from mm. 35-42, changes to 12/8 time, is in the dominant key of Bb, and features the solo cornet. The final statement of the main melody is played by the horn with a return to 4/4 time and the tonic key from m. 43 to the end.

Example 8: “Song,” mm. 9-20, Flugelhorn melody (transposed to concert pitch) with chord symbols⁵⁴

Chord symbols: Eb⁹, Fm⁹, Gm⁷, C(b⁹), Fm⁷, Bb⁹, Eb Fm⁷ Gm⁷, C(b⁹), Fm⁷, Abm⁷, Db⁹, Eb⁹, Fm⁹, Gm⁷, C(b⁹), Fm⁹, Bb⁹(sus4), Bb(b⁹), Gm⁷ C(b⁹), Fm⁷ Bb(b⁹).

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⁵⁴ Barnes, *Classical Suite*, 15-16.

Table 1. Phrases in “Song” from the Classical Suite⁵⁵

Measures	Formal Section	Solo Voice	Time Sig. and Key
1-8	Introduction	Cornet	4/4, Eb
9-20	A	Flugelhorn	4/4, Eb
21-34	A'	Euphonium	4/4, Eb
35-42	B	Cornet	12/8, Bb
43-58 (End)	A''	Horn	4/4, Eb

The substitution of conical brass instruments for the trumpets and the trombone gives this movement a unique character when heard in conjunction with the other movements of the quintet that use the standard brass quintet instrumentation. By using both the cornet and flugelhorn, instead of two trumpets, with the euphonium and horn, Barnes is able to feature four distinct solo tone colors in this movement (The tuba, the fifth voice, is featured in a prominent role in the next movement.).

Toccata

Barnes's *Toccata* is constructed to highlight the tone color differences between trumpets, cornets, and flugelhorns. It is scored for twelve total players with three groups of four players

⁵⁵ James Barnes, “Song” in *Classical Suite for Brass Quintet, Op. 79* (San Antonio TX: Southern Music Co., 1992), 15-19.

performing on trumpets, cornets, and flugelhorns respectively. It could be performed with twelve trumpets, but in the score Barnes states that

every effort should be made to use cornets and flugelhorns with the trumpets. Using all three instrumental colors renders the Toccata's desired effect, both in the vertically complex harmonic sections and in the more linear contrapuntal episodes. The contrast between the trumpets, cornets, and flugelhorns make the ensemble sound completely different than if only trumpets are used.⁵⁶

Rather than writing for twelve equal voices, Barnes emphasizes the differences in timbre between these instruments by dividing the trumpets, cornets, and flugelhorns into three choirs of like instruments, and he generally gives each choir a distinct role within the musical texture at any given time. For large sections of the piece, each choir has general range so that the trumpet parts are almost always higher than the cornets, which are higher than the flugelhorns. These ranges place the instruments with the most brilliant tone colors highest in the texture and those with the softest tone colors in the lowest position in the texture.

Toccata is ternary form (AABA-Coda). The opening section, mm. 1-36, is harmonically static and highly contrapuntal, and the middle section is harmonically complex with homophonic melodic lines over a vertically complex rhythmic-ostinato accompaniment.

The opening of the first section resembles a fugue in the way that it is constructed. First, the trumpet choir plays alone for the first thirteen beats, and then the cornets enter with almost identical material except down a perfect fifth, while the trumpets continue with motivically related material. One beat before m. 8, the flugelhorns enter with material that is again similar at

⁵⁶ James Barnes, *Toccata for 4 Trumpets, 4 Cornets and 4 Flugelhorns or 12 Trumpets, Op. 104*. (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 2000), 2.

an octave below the original trumpet entrance. The distinct entrances and ranges of each instrument group emphasize their relative differences of timbre.

Example 9: Toccata, trumpet and cornet entrances, mm. 1-4, condensed to three staves (in Bb)⁵⁷

Allegro vivo (♩ = 168 - 176)

Trumpets 1-4

Cornets 1-4

Flugelhorns 1-4

Example 10: Toccata, flugelhorn entrance, mm. 7-8, condensed to three staves (in Bb)⁵⁸

Trumpets 1-4

Cornets 1-4

Flugelhorns 1-4

f ben marcato

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The harmonic content of the opening section is limited. It is made up of only four pitches C, F, Bb, and Eb (in Bb), which can be stacked as a series of perfect fourths. In contrast, the middle section of this piece is more vertically complex. This section features discrete blocks where two of the three choirs play a harmonically dense rhythmic ostinato underneath the third

⁵⁷ Barnes, *Toccata*, 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

choir's melodic soli. The vertical sonority of each block is made up of two triads, each a half step apart, with each triad placed in a different instrumental choir.

In mm. 37-43, the cornets play a unison soli in A harmonic-minor while the trumpets play E major triads and the flugelhorns play F major triads (See Example 5). In the next block, mm. 44-48, the trumpets play melodically in C harmonic minor while the cornets and flugelhorns accompany with respective G and Ab major triads. The third block is organized in a similar manner with the flugelhorns playing the melodic soli in Eb minor while the trumpets play B major triads and the cornets play Bb major triads.

Example 11: Toccata, mm. 39-40, condensed to three staves (in Bb) ⁵⁹

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The contrasting textural and harmonic styles of the different sections of the *Toccata* are unified by the use of a four-note that occurs throughout the piece. Examples of this motive can be heard at the opening of the piece (m. 1, Example 9), at the beginning of the cornet melody in

⁵⁹ Barnes, *Toccata*, 6.

the middle section (m. 39, Example 11), and at the climax of the piece, in mm. 87-88, where it occurs in augmentation in the trumpets and flugelhorns (See Example 12).

Example 12: Toccata, mm. 87-88 (in Bb) ⁶⁰

Trumpets 1-2

Trumpets 3-4

Cornets 1-4

Flugelhorns 1-2

Flugelhorn 3

Flugelhorn 4

fff

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In *Toccata*, Barnes contrasts the tone color differences between groups of trumpets, cornets, and flugelhorns in several ways including contrapuntally—with each choir acting like a voice in a contrapuntal form; melodically—by giving each choir a soli in the middle section of

⁶⁰ Barnes, *Toccata*, 10.

the piece; and harmonically—by keeping each triad in only one instrument group within the more complex harmonies.

Barnes's Use of Humor

In *Composers on Composing for Band* Barnes said, “My Dad once advised me to ‘take what you do seriously, but never take *yourself* too seriously.’”⁶¹ It is difficult to know Barnes for any length of time without seeing that humor is an important aspect of his personality. His conversations and lectures are rarely without jokes or humorous anecdotes. When discussing the some of the emotions that can be expressed through music including tragedy, the macabre, and joy, Barnes asked, “Why can’t Laughter? Laughter is just as important as anything else in life.”⁶² While he does takes his work very seriously and has written music that is both thoughtful and personal, notably his Third Symphony, Barnes’s sense of humor pervades much of his teaching, writing, and music.

Comedy in music can occur in many forms through a variety of techniques. In *Comedy in Music: A Historical Bibliographical Resource Guide*, Enrique Alberto Arias states that “comedy in the broadest sense is the antithesis of tragedy.” It “suggests the playful aspects and vital rhythms of life.”⁶³ It can be present in a wide variety of musical situations and can be conveyed through a diverse range of compositional techniques. Comedy can be present in the character of music, as in classical *scherzi*, for example.⁶⁴ It can also be referential and come from quotations, references, or exaggerations of other works, musical techniques, or existing styles. Humor can be created by the intentional subversion of audience expectations or established conventions or

⁶¹ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 19.

⁶² Barnes, interview.

⁶³ Arias, Enrique Alberto Arias. *Comedy in Music: A Historical Bibliographical Resource Guide*. (Westport, CT: Greenword Press, 2001), 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 4.

through the juxtaposition of disparate styles or moods. Humor can also be achieved through the use of unusual instrumental techniques or exaggerated or comedic performances.⁶⁵

Humor in Barnes's Music

Barnes has written a variety of music that contains humorous elements or is light in character. Many of his symphonies, for example, contain scherzo movements. These are generally descriptive in nature and can range in mood from the dark scherzo of the Third Symphony that has a “sarcasm and bitter sweetness about it, because it has to do with the pomposity and conceit of certain people in this world”⁶⁶ to the brighter scherzo of the Fourth Symphony that “describes the humorous and chaotic scrambling of an alerted herd of pronghorns” at Yellowstone National Park.⁶⁷ Some of Barnes's melodies have a humorous character, such as the melody in the first solo tuba entrance in his *Tuba Concerto* that is marked “Jolly.” He also often uses tempo designations that indicate specific lighter moods; for example, he uses *Vivace*⁶⁸ and “boisterously”⁶⁹ in the *Fanfare and Capriccio*.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 3-5.

⁶⁶ James Barnes, *Third Symphony, Op. 89*. (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1997), 4.

⁶⁷ James Barnes, *Fourth Symphony (Yellowstone Portraits), Op. 103b*. (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 2002), 2.

⁶⁸ James Barnes, *Fanfare and Capriccio for Solo Trumpet: Arranged for Trumpet and Piano by the Composer*, 9.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 14.

Example 13: Tuba Concerto, “Solo Tuba”, mm. 20-42⁷⁰

20 Solo "Jolly" *mf* *mp*

28 *f* *mp*

31

35 *mf* *ff*

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“Overture” from *Classical Suite*

Barnes’s brass quintets, in particular, have many humorous elements. He said, “My trouble with writing for brass quintet is [that] I can’t write for brass quintet without getting silly.... It’s like a little bitty band.” He played in brass quintets through college and he described the experience. “It’s really fun to play in a quintet. It’s probably more fun to play in one than it is to listen to one.... A lot of chamber music is like baseball. It’s more fun to play that it is to watch.”

One example of a humorous moment from the *Classical Suite* occurs in the middle of the “Overture” where Barnes uses a direct quotation from another composer’s work when he inserts material from Richard Strauss’ *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*. This movement is in the key

⁷⁰ James Barnes, “Tuba Solo,” *Concerto for Tuba*, Op. 96, Piano Reduction by Yukiko Nishimura (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1997), 2.

E♭, and as it approaches the end of the exposition, Barnes spends nineteen measures hammering away at the B♭7 dominant chord, as if to make it very clear that an E♭ chord is coming, but before it can resolved at rehearsal 9, the second trumpet interjects a short quote from *Till Eulenspiegel*, Strauss' tone poem about a trickster folk hero (See Examples 14 and 15). This quotation would be unexpected by a listener, and it interrupts the anticipated resolution of the harmony while referencing a comedic character.

Example 14: Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche, by Richard Strauss, pickup to seven measures before rehearsal 3 to five measures before rehearsal 3, condensed and transposed to concert pitch⁷¹

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system is for Woodwinds, featuring a pickup measure with a forte (*ff*) dynamic, followed by a half rest, and then a phrase for Oboes and English Horn starting with a sforzando (*sfz*) dynamic. The second system is for the Clarinet in D (trans.), marked *lustig* and starting with a sforzando (*sfz*) dynamic. The third system is for Strings and Horns, marked *ff*. The tempo/mood is indicated as *Immer sehr lebhaft*. The key signature has one flat (B♭) and the time signature is 6/8.

⁷¹ Richard Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche*, [http://imslp.org/wiki/Till_Eulenspiegels_lustige_Streiche,_Op.28_\(Strauss,_Richard\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Till_Eulenspiegels_lustige_Streiche,_Op.28_(Strauss,_Richard)) (accessed on November 22, 2014).

Example 15: “Overture” from Classical Suite, four measures before rehearsal 9 to two measures after rehearsal 9⁷²

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“Headache Scherzo” from *Divertissement*

The *Divertissement* was composed for the Kansas Brass Quintet, the KU faculty quintet, and Barnes described how he wrote for a group of friends and colleagues. “Both times I ended up writing for brass quintet it was for people I knew, and so I wrote all these jokes in there, and licks and stuff.... When I wrote that *Divertissement* I’d played with those guys for years before Scott⁷³ came, and I knew everything that they couldn’t do.... and so I wrote all these tricky things in there [and] things that were a little tough for them.”⁷⁴

In this piece, Barnes uses humor in some of his movement titles. For example, the second movement is titled the “Headache Scherzo (or The Blight of the Fumble Bee).” In “Headache

⁷² Barnes, *Classical Suite*, 5.

⁷³ Scott Watson, Professor of Tuba/Euphonium at KU, joined the Kansas Brass Quintet in 1979.

⁷⁴ Barnes, interview.

Scherzo,” the “Scherzo” is a genre designation with implications of humor, and the “Headache” reflects the agitated mood of the piece. “The Blight of the Fumble Bee” is a pun on Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Flight of the Bumble Bee” and refers to that work’s fast chromatic sixteenth note lines, while “Fumble” refers to the difficulty of performing the fast technical writing.

This movement is in ternary form with two contrasting sections. The opening section is fast and agitated with tight, nasal tone colors, and the middle section is an extended quasi-cadenza for the tuba.

In the opening section Barnes uses dissonance, mutes, a relatively high tessitura, rhythm, and extended performance techniques to create a strong sense of manic agitation. Writing for only the top four voices, he calls for an unusual combination of mutes. The first trumpet plays with a cup mute, while the second trumpet plays with a Harmon mute without the stem. The horn uses a horn mute, and the trombone uses a Harmon mute with the stem extended. The tuba does not play in this section, and the horn and trombone are written in the middle of their registers so there is no true bass voice. The use of mutes and the relatively high tessitura combine to give this section a closed and nasal tone quality.

With the tempo marking *Vivace* (180 bpm) Barnes writes for the trumpets in a canon, with alternating groups of sixteenth-notes. In the opening eight bars, the horn and trombone play staccato eighth-notes in harmonic seconds and in a three eighth-note hemiola against the trumpets’ alternating, even sixteenth note rhythm, creating both harmonic and rhythmic dissonance.

Example 16: “Headache Scherzo,” mm. 1-4⁷⁵

Vivace (♩ = 180)
cup mt.

1

p

Tpt.

2

harmon mt.- no stem

p

Hn.

mute

p

Tbn.

harmon mt.- stem extended

p

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At the end of this section, Barnes uses extended instrumental techniques in a final dissonant and obnoxious musical gesture when the trumpets trill and then the horn and trombone players flutter-tongue in harmonic minor seconds.

⁷⁵ James Barnes, *Divertissement: for Brass Quintet* (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Co., 1984), 14.

Example 17: “Headache Scherzo,” mm. 44-49⁷⁶

The musical score for Example 17, “Headache Scherzo,” mm. 44-49, is written for four instruments: Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Hn., and Tbn. The Tpt. parts feature trills and dynamic markings of *ff* and *mf*. The Hn. and Tbn. parts include flutter-tongue and pull mt. markings, and a dynamic marking of *ff*.

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The middle section of this movement is an extended unaccompanied solo for tuba that is marked “quasi una cadenza.”⁷⁷ There are a series of indications to the player of particular moods that are to be conveyed. The tuba solo is first “jolly” and then “pensive”⁷⁸ and then becomes “increasingly more agitated” before the tuba player is eventually instructed to play “angrily.” As the melodic line becomes “increasingly more agitated,” it gradually rises in tessitura, becomes more accented, and contains more large intervallic leaps. Like a comically frustrated *basso buffo* character or perhaps an 800 lb. bumblebee, the humor of this section comes from the extreme characterization provided by the tuba.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 19.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 20.

Example 18: “Headache Scherzo,” mm. 72-82⁷⁹

The musical score for Tuba (Tba.) in 3/4 time consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a measure rest, followed by a half note G2, a quarter note F#2, and a half note E2. The second staff continues with a half note D2, a quarter note C2, and a half note B1. The third staff shows a more complex melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, including accidentals like sharps and flats. The tempo/mood markings 'increasingly more agitated' and 'angrily' are placed above and below the staves respectively.

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“Tin-Ear Rag” from *Divertissement*

The fourth movement of the *Divertissement*, the “Tin-Ear Rag,” has the greatest number of different comic techniques and effects among the individual movements in Barnes’s brass quintet repertoire. As implied by the “Tin-Ear” portion of the “Tin-Ear Rag,” Barnes uses a combination of humorously contrasting musical styles, unexpected notes and rhythms, unusual instrumental effects, and non-standard performance techniques to give an exaggerated, tongue-in-cheek impression of incompetence by both the composer and performers.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 21.

The humorous tone of the movement is established when the four-bar introduction ends with a “wrong” note. In the key of Bb, the expected note here would probably be an F or other note in the F dominant chord, so that the dominant at the end of the introduction could resolve to the tonic at the beginning of the first strain. Instead, the final beat of the introduction is a *fortissimo* concert Gb in four of the five voices, which is a half-step higher than the anticipated F.

Example 19: “Tin-Ear Rag,” Introduction⁸⁰

Medium Rag-Time Tempo (♩ = 106)

The musical score is for the introduction of 'Tin-Ear Rag' and is written for five parts: Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The key signature is two flats (Bb) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Medium Rag-Time Tempo' with a quarter note equal to 106 beats per minute. The score consists of four measures. The first three measures are marked with a forte (f) dynamic, and the fourth measure is marked with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The notation includes various musical symbols such as accidentals, slurs, and articulation marks.

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⁸⁰ Barnes, *Divertissement*, 35.

The first strain is in an uncouth ragtime style, with indications for the trumpets and horn to “sneer”⁸¹ in m. 8 and for the horn to play “crassly”⁸² beginning in the pickups to m. 14.

Whereas a typical rag would have a consistent meter, there are several 3/4 and 3/8 bars interspersed throughout this strain that interrupt the established 2/4 time signature and give the strain a highly uneven quality.

Example 20: “Tin-Ear Rag,” first four bars of the first strain⁸³

The musical score for "Tin-Ear Rag" shows the first four bars of the first strain for five instruments: Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The score is in 2/4 time with various meter changes to 3/4 and 3/8. It includes dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*, and performance instructions like "sneer" and "smear".

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Typically, at the trio section of a march or rag, it modulates to the subdominant, or “adds a flat.” The third strain of this movement, beginning four bars before rehearsal 4, is written as if

⁸¹ Ibid, 35.

⁸² Ibid, 36.

⁸³ Ibid, 35.

some of the players miss the key change. The opening four bars contain an Eb chord with a clashing A-natural in the trombone part. The horn enters at rehearsal 4 with the melody from the early Twentieth Century American song “Hail, Hail the Gang’s All Here”⁸⁴ in F major, while the other voices are in Eb. The horn is instructed to sound “forced”⁸⁵ and told that “some vibrato would be nice.” Not only is the horn in the wrong key (along with the “sassy”⁸⁶ first trumpet at rehearsal 5), but the horn overshoots the penultimate note of the phrase by playing a half-step too high. The bitonality in this section gives the comic impression of an exaggeratedly poor performance by the players. Barnes described the events that inspired section, “One time we played a wedding downtown and it was a real old arrangement of something or other, and Bushouse⁸⁷ wasn’t looking at what he was doing and it was an Eb horn part, and he came in and he played about half of it up a step from what he should have, and that’s what it comes from.... [It is an] inside joke with Bushouse.”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Barnes, interview.

⁸⁵ Barnes, *Divertissement*, 39.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 40.

⁸⁷ David Bushouse, former Professor of Horn, retired Associated Dean of the School of Music at KU.

⁸⁸ Barnes, interview.

Example 21: “Tin-Ear Rag,” excerpt from third strain⁸⁹

1
Tpt. 1

2
Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

mf

mf

mp

f “forced” - some vibrato would be nice

mf

mp

mp

sim.

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Various humorously incongruent styles occur in this movement. The fourth strain, at rehearsal 6, is “*like a circus march*”⁹⁰ and includes cued audience applause and a whip played by the first trumpet player. The final section of the coda is marked at a “stripper” tempo with swung eighth notes and a trombone solo that is first marked to “*really blare it out*”⁹¹ but near the end to be played in a “*very prim and proper*” manner. These contrasting and exaggerated styles create humor by continuously disrupting the listeners’ expectations.

⁸⁹ Barnes, *Divertissement*, 39.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 40.

⁹¹ Ibid., 46.

This movement also incorporates several optional non-standard performance elements, or “shtick,” that require exaggerated, comic performances from the quintet. These include a drum-line style “roll-off” vocalized by the quintet just before a return of the opening material, though Barnes indicates that “these four measures can be cut if this ‘roll-off’ is below the group’s dignity.”⁹² The movement also includes a vamp that imitates a stuck record three measures after rehearsal 10, and the last note is sung in the style of a barbershop quartet on the syllable “Hm!”⁹³

Example 22: “Roll-Off” from “Tin-Ear Rag”⁹⁴

a tempo primo
Whole Quintet shouts: *

The musical score is for a quintet, with parts for Trumpet 1 (Tpt. 1), Trumpet 2 (Tpt. 2), Horn (Hn.), Trombone (Tbn.), and Tuba (Tba.). The score consists of six measures. The first two measures are for the first two instruments, and the last two measures are for the last two instruments. The third and fourth measures are for all five instruments. The notes are as follows: Measure 1: Tpt. 1 (G4, A4), Tpt. 2 (F#4, G4), Hn. (F#4, G4), Tbn. (F#4, G4), Tba. (F#4, G4). Measure 2: Tpt. 1 (A4, B4), Tpt. 2 (G4, A4), Hn. (G4, A4), Tbn. (G4, A4), Tba. (G4, A4). Measure 3: Tpt. 1 (A4, B4), Tpt. 2 (G4, A4), Hn. (G4, A4), Tbn. (G4, A4), Tba. (G4, A4). Measure 4: Tpt. 1 (A4, B4), Tpt. 2 (G4, A4), Hn. (G4, A4), Tbn. (G4, A4), Tba. (G4, A4). Measure 5: Tpt. 1 (A4, B4), Tpt. 2 (G4, A4), Hn. (G4, A4), Tbn. (G4, A4), Tba. (G4, A4). Measure 6: Tpt. 1 (A4, B4), Tpt. 2 (G4, A4), Hn. (G4, A4), Tbn. (G4, A4), Tba. (G4, A4). The lyrics are: Measure 1: DumDum!, Measure 2: DumDum!, Measure 3: Dr-r-r-r-r, Measure 4: Rum Tum!, Measure 5: Dr-r-r-r-r, Measure 6: Rum Tum!.

*These four measures can be cut if this “roll-off” is below the group’s dignity.

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⁹² Ibid, 42.

⁹³ Ibid, 46.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 42.

Barnes's Use of Older Styles

Barnes writes using a wide variety of musical styles, techniques, and forms. His music can reflect the influence of popular styles like jazz or ragtime or of classical styles ranging from Bach to Bartok. His music is, at times, written with a dissonant, contemporary musical vocabulary, but at other times it can be relatively conservative. This wide range of musical influences reflects Barnes's deep study of the classical repertoire. He has said, "All great composers throughout history speak to me in some manner: from Dufay to Duruflé."⁹⁵

Within Barnes's solo trumpet and brass quintet music, the "Passacaglia" from the *Classical Suite* shows the most direct influence of historical forms and techniques on his compositional style. He describes the "Passacaglia" as "sort of an homage"⁹⁶ to the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and to Bach's use of counterpoint. Barnes has noted that "no composer has ever touched Bach as a contrapuntalist. He is truly one of the greatest geniuses of all time. The older I get, the more I appreciate the immensity of this man's contribution to music."⁹⁷

The passacaglia is a form where variations are based on a repeating bass theme that is first heard alone and is typically eight measures long. Passacaglias are traditionally in the minor mode and in triple meter.⁹⁸

Barnes's "Passacaglia" is in f minor. The theme, which is first stated alone by the tuba, is followed by twelve variations. This theme is notable for its overall descending chromatic motion.

⁹⁵ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 21.

⁹⁶ Barnes, Interview.

⁹⁷ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 22.

⁹⁸ Kent Kennan, *Counterpoint: Based on Eighteenth-Century Practice*, 4th Ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 274-75.

The half notes in the first six measures chromatically descend from F₂ to C₂, and then, with an octave displacement, the theme descends tonally from Bb₂ to E₂, the leading tone.

Example 23: Barnes's "Passacaglia," theme⁹⁹



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Example 24: Barnes's "Passacaglia" Theme, simplified to show chromatic motion



The descending chromaticism gives this theme a solemn tone that is evocative of laments from Baroque opera. An example of a similarly chromatic ground from Bach's repertoire can be found in the "Crucifixus" from his B minor Mass.

Example 25: Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*, "Dido's Lament," ground bass¹⁰⁰



⁹⁹ Barnes, *Classical Suite*, 20.

¹⁰⁰ Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas* [http://imslp.org/wiki/Dido_and_Aeneas_Z.626_\(Purcell,_Henry\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Dido_and_Aeneas_Z.626_(Purcell,_Henry)) (accessed on November 22, 2014) .

Example 26: J.S. Bach, B minor Mass, “Crucifixus,” ground bass¹⁰¹



Bach’s best known passacaglia is from the *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 582*, for keyboard. Notable similarities exist between Bach’s C minor passacaglia and the one in Barnes’s *Classical Suite*. They are both in minor keys, 3/4 time, and begin with eight-bar themes that are first stated alone in the bass voice. They also both have gradually increasing rhythmic activity over the first few variations.¹⁰² In addition, the passacaglias have variations in which the theme is placed in higher voices. In variation 12 of the Bach, the theme is two octaves above its original position, and in variations 10 and 11 of the Barnes, the theme is also two octaves higher, first in the second trumpet and then in the muted first trumpet.

Example 27: Bach, Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, Variation 12 (Excerpt)¹⁰³



¹⁰¹ Johann Sebastian Bach, *Mass in B minor*, [http://imslp.org/wiki/Mass_in_B_minor,_BWV_232_\(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Mass_in_B_minor,_BWV_232_(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian)) (accessed on November 21, 2014)

¹⁰² Kennan, 274.

¹⁰³ Johann Sebastian Bach, “Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582,” [http://imslp.org/wiki/Passacaglia_in_C_minor,_BWV_582_\(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Passacaglia_in_C_minor,_BWV_582_(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian)) (accessed on November 21, 2014)

Example 28: Barnes, “Passacaglia,” Variation 10 (Excerpt)¹⁰⁴

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Both passacaglias also have variations where the theme is partially obscured and the texture is reduced. The sixth variation in Barnes’s passacaglia resembles the sixteenth variation in Bach’s passacaglia. Each has a thin texture based, mostly on sixteenth-notes lines that generally rise through each measure. Barnes emphasizes the lighter texture of this variation (6) by indicating staccato articulations for most of the notes, in contrast to the previous variation, which has many groups of slurred sixteenth-notes, and the following variation that is marked *sostenuto*.

¹⁰⁴ Barnes, *Classical Suite*, 24.

Example 29: Bach, Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, Variation 16 (excerpt)¹⁰⁵



Example 30: Barnes, “Passacaglia,” Variation 6 (excerpt)¹⁰⁶



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Interesting structural differences occur between these two passacaglias. Bach’s final variation is probably the most texturally dense section of the passacaglia, and it ends on a half cadence; however, it is immediately followed by a fugue. Bach leaves the passacaglia structurally and tonally open because it is paired with the fugue and therefore does not function independently.

¹⁰⁵ Bach, “Passacaglia.”

¹⁰⁶ Barnes, “Passacaglia,” 22.

Though a movement within a larger work, Barnes's "Passacaglia" is structurally and tonally closed. After a *fortissimo* climax at the first beat of Variation 10, the texture, dynamics, and rhythmic motion are gradually reduced through Variations 10, 11, and 12. Barnes uses partial symmetry so that Variation 10 contains all of the material from Variation 2, and Variation 11 contains the material from Variation 1. In Variations 10 and 11, however, the theme is transposed up two octaves and is played by the second trumpet in Variation 10 and by the first trumpet in Variation 11 rather than by the tuba. Barnes also uses mutes in Variations 11 and 12. The color changes, along with softer dynamics, emphasize the gradual lessening of intensity. Variation 12, the final phrase of the movement, has a simplified theme in the muted horn, with counterpoint in the cup-muted second trumpet, and this variation is extended by two measures to allow for an authentic cadence. This symmetry gives the movement a dynamic arch where it begins simply and quietly, comes to a climax on the first beat of Variation 10, and then gradually fades to nothing.

Conclusion

James Barnes has a practical approach to composition. He values craftsmanship and hard work over inspiration, and he writes with thoughtful care for musical details and a broad knowledge of musical technique and style. He strives to write instrumental music that is both playable and idiomatic while also being appropriately challenging for performers and enjoyable for audiences. He has said, “I write my music for musicians, and they know what to do with it.”¹⁰⁷

Instrumental tone color is important to Barnes; he has said that he does not separate the processes of composition and orchestration, and that the moment he conceives a musical idea, he knows who is going to play it.¹⁰⁸ His choices of instrumentation are therefore tied to his conception of each piece, and the use of contrasting tone colors is often an important element in the form and construction of many of his works. In performance, the *Toccata*, for example, is much more comprehensible with the use of the composer’s preferred instrumentation because the piece is constructed specifically to emphasize the differences between the choirs of trumpet, cornets, and flugelhorns.

Humor is another important element in Barnes’s music. It can vary in intensity from subtle to explicit and express moods ranging from jolly to sarcastic. He uses a wide variety of techniques to add humor to his music including movement titles, tempo designations, references to other works or styles, incongruent elements or styles, and nonstandard performance

¹⁰⁷ Barnes, interview.

¹⁰⁸ Barnes, *Composers on Composing*, 8.

techniques. Barnes often uses humor in his conversations and lectures, and this sense of humor is frequently reflected in his music.

Barnes is a student of musical history and style who has made an intense study of broad range of music. When describing some of his most admired composers, he cited examples ranging from Bach to Bartok.¹⁰⁹ This reverence for and knowledge of the classical canon informs his composition and is mirrored in the broad range of his musical style and vocabulary. The “Passacaglia” from the *Classical Suite*, for example, is directly influenced by the music of Bach in form and vocabulary.

Barnes’s trumpet and brass quintet repertoire is diverse. It spans from the solemnity of the “Passacaglia” to the absurdity of the “Tin-Ear Rag.” The flowing lyricism of the “Song” from the *Classical Suite* contrasts with the motivic counterpoint of the *Toccata*. By placing this repertoire within the context of his approach to composition, it is hoped that these works will receive more performances in the future and will be better understood by future performers and audiences.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 22, 23.

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Appendix

Selected Recordings

Victor and Brian Bowman, the United States Air Force Band, and conductor James Bankhead have recorded the *Duo Concertante, Op. 74*. It is available on the album *On Winged Flight*. Pat Stuckemeyer, euphonium, has also recorded it with Justin White (trumpet) and Ellen Bottorff (piano) on the album *Just for Fun*.

The Kansas Brass Quintet recorded the *Divertissement, Op. 50* on the album *Rare Breeds and Dog-Eared Classics*.

“Poem” and “Scherzino” were recorded by Philip Smith. The recording of “Poem” is included with the book *Concert Studies for Trumpet*, and the recording of “Scherzino” is included with the book *Advanced Concert Studies for Trumpet*.

Solos and Chamber Works for Low Brass

Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra, Op. 96 – James Barnes’s concerto for tuba was written for Scott Watson. R. Mark Rogers transcribed a version with band accompaniment, and Yukiko Nishimura created a piano reduction. The concerto was premiered on February 1, 1997 by Watson and the United States Army Band with the composer conducting. Patrick Sheridan recorded it on the album *Storyteller*.

Concerto for Euphonium, Op. 132 - Barnes's concerto for Euphonium was commissioned by Patrick Stuckemeyer. It has been recorded on the album *footprints* by Stuckemeyer and the Arizona State University Wind Ensemble with Gary Hill conducting.

Tangents, Op. 109 - This piece has been recorded by Symphonia, a euphonium-tuba ensemble, on the album *Symphonia Fantastique!*.

Fanfare - *Fanfare* for tuba quartet (2 euphoniums and 2 tubas) was written for the 2008 International Tuba/Euphonium Conference and published in 2011.

Yorkshire Ballad - In addition to the original version for band, Yorkshire Ballad has been arranged for various ensembles including tuba and piano, tuba and band, and tuba and string orchestra.